

exchange point. With the new crew changes of Nov., I bid a "one train job" in out of "Port". It was the "club car train", formerly no. 621 for many years, leaving about seven twenty a.m. and arriving at Hunterspoint Ave^v nine fifteen. "That was it" for the day, and all we had to do was deadhead home to "Port"!

On November thirtieth the non-operating unions struck the LIRR, which was obliged to completely "shut-down" operations. This strike would last until~~1973~~. January twentieth of 1973, the longest in history. As a result of below freezing temperatures during that period, nine Alco diesels would never run again due to cracked engine blocks. Somehow, with reduced forces, no one thought of draining the water out of those locomotives, which of course were "shut-down."



BAR #74
Hillside Yard, Hollis
Photo/Archive: Dan Marra



BAR #66, #72
LI City Yard A

As a result, the LIRR was obliged to lease for an indefinite period of time, five EMD "G-P7" road-switchers from the BAR in northern Maine. They were nos. 62, 64, 66, 72 and 74, the first time ever that EMD power was used in day to day operations on the RR! On March fifteenth, the RR lost another diesel in a crash in Ronkonkoma, that was the 1560. She was sitting on the "main" east of the manual block signal, having just returned from Greenport with a few freight cars. An eastbound "push-pull" train from Hicksville, unable to stop in time due to an air brake problem on its train, crashed into the freight.

On April sixteenth, I bid in the brakeman's job on the Ronkonkoma-Greenport two-car "scoot". Besides my conductor, "Willie" Russell, there was Charlie Read, the "hogger", who "resented" the Alco "RS-1" that was usually assigned on trains 202 and 211. With two "pings", it was suitable for the run, Charlie thought it beneath his "dignity", I guess, to have the small engine. By that time they were a rarity on any passenger train on the RP. With the speed limit "out there" at forty miles an hour, we had no trouble "keeping to time" with an "RS-1"!

Charlie was an "old timer" on the Greenport runs, having fired for various men when the job came out of Jamaica and was headed by G5s and hand-fired K4s. His rather, Walter Read had also worked the Main Line and had his name on the cab of Class D56s no. 84, a 4-4-0 type. Names on engines ceased when the LIRR became part of the N.Y. Division of the PRR in 1928. We had no more than twenty passengers in either direction, so one car would have been enough.

The job was "made to order", in that the hours, from ten a.m. to four thirty p.m., were "ideal", with Sat. and Sun. off. They were certainly the "best" hours I would ever have in my time on the LIRR! "RR" men used to call such hours "Bankers Hours", and believe me, in train and engine service, hours like these were non-existent prior to our new "eight hour day!"

Going either east or west on this "Scoot" there were no commuters, never in the two years I was on this job did I ever punch a commutation ticket. Our passengers were strictly "day trippers" or tourists. I had bid in the job at the perfect time of the year.

As we got out of the "woods", (after Calverton), it was a nice sight to see the farmers plowing their land again all the way east. So far, this part of Long Island remained pretty much the way it had been when I was growing up in Cutchogue. As far as the RR was concerned, cinder or sand ballast was still the rule out east. All the former stations were gone except Riverhead and Greenport. The agent at the latter had been discontinued after the 1968 summer, while Riverhead's agent would leave for good in early Sept.

Freight business was mainly tank cars of liquid ingredients for making "potato spray" for the GLF plant in Riverhead, and occasionally carloads of lumber



**#211 passing Agway, formerly GLF plant
Riverhead - August 17, 1970
Photo/Archive: Richard F. Makse**

for Medford, Riverhead or Southold. In early spring there were still a few cars of "seed potatoes" for the farmers along the line. At Greenport, the former station waiting room now sported a luncheonette, very handy for either train or railroad bus passengers, not to mention train crews!

There was ample time in Greenport to explore the historic village with its fascinating waterfront and shaded streets of well-kept old homes. Many times I went over to Shelter Island on the convenient ferry service at the depot. That "place" is so quiet after the "city people" leave after the summer is over, that it's almost ^{as} if you were someplace up in rural Vermont! Fridays I looked forward to all week, as there was always delicious home-made clam chowder at Joe Shipman's little restaurant on Front St. For truly "gourmet dining", one could take a local bus for ten cents up to Mill Creek west of town on "route twenty five", and have broiled eels at Armando's Barge, (a restaurant), on Peconic Bay. I did this a couple of times and then walked back the two miles to Greenport to cover train 211.

Back on the "rest of the RR", just about all the six-wheel truck cars, (ex NYC), were scrapped or out of service, as well as all the "un-modernized" cars that the LIRR had bought "second-hand" from other railroads. Even the entire "Silver Streak" equipment had gone to the scrappers. Mostly this was because of the recent electricification to Huntington. Besides the "lightweight" parlor car, (read ex sleepers), fleet, the diesel service boasted the entire eighty cars of the 2900 series coaches, the thirty ex B&M cars, "push-pull" cars, four ex FEC and fifteen ex KCS "lightweight" coaches. Right after Labor Day, our two "pings" were replaced with a single "KCS" car. Now we really could be called a "Shorty"!

On Thanksgiving Day our crew had "a change of scene". We relieved a Jamaica based crew at Patchogue on train 4000 for Montauk, at four fifty two a.m.. With about an hour out there, Charlie Read and I walked around the fog-bound yard and noted the now closed bunk house and station. The yard was empty except for about twenty parlor cars stored for the winter.

Going back to Patchogue on train 4001, we noted our ex KCS coaches rode well on the rough track east of Speonk, of course having our speed restricted to